Refutation of Caste-Class-Discrimination in Buddhist Tantric Literature

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Tantric Buddhism is a branch of Mahåyåna, generally denoted by the terms Mantrayåna or Vajrayåna. The Mahåyåna tradition believes that the teachings into the Mantrayåna were given by the Buddha when he turned the Wheel of Law for the second time. While he gave the teachings of the Påramitånaya at G®dhrakË†a, he manifested himself at the same time at Ír¥dhånyaka†aka and gave the teachings of the Mantranaya. The tradition also believes that all the Buddhist Tantras had been taught by the Buddha, having manifested himself in different forms. According to the historical view of modern scholars, one of the earliest Buddhist Tantric works, namely, the Guhyasamåja Tantra dates back to the third or the fourth century A. D., while the last one, the Kålacakra Tantra (KC), was disseminated in the 10th or 11th century A.D. The Buddhist Tantric literature thus marks the last phase of Indian Buddhism and possesses some unique characteristics in relation to their contents and language. These works furnish details of Tantric ritual consisting of various Tantric rites such as initiation of a disciple into a particular Tantric cycle, worship of particular deities in the Maˆ∂ala, various consecrations or empowerments, yogic practices and so on. The path of enlightenment prescribed in the Påramitåyåna would require many a life time to reach the goal, while the Mantrayåna is a quick path, through which it is possible to attain the Complete Enlightened Buddhahood (*samyaksambuddhatva*) in the present life time and in the present body. The language of Buddhist Tantras is supposed to be Sanskrit. However it is not necessarily the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, it is much more corrupt. While the Tantras are believed to have been taught by the Buddha himself, there are a number of secondary works evidently composed by Tantric masters. They came from different social backgrounds; they hailed from different castes and classes of Indian society, and pursued different types of professions and life styles. For example, Sarahapåda, the author of the Dohåkoßa, was

formerly a learned Bråhmaˆa named Råhula, master of the Vedas and the Íåstras. He decided to convert to Buddhism and became a monk. Some came from royal families: IndrabhËti, the author of the *Sahajasiddhi* (Toh. 2260) was a king and Lak∑m¥ʃkara, who wrote a commentary on that work (Toh. 2261), his sister, a princess. Some masters came from low classes and had low professions. Some even belonged to tribal communities. Among these masters, there were arrow-makers, cobblers, rag-pickers, street-sweepers, entertainers and menial labourers of all types. The caste, the class, the profession or even the gender did not become an obstacle in the path of Buddhahood. In this regard, there is a verse quoted in the Vimalaprabhå (VP), the celebrated, encyclopaedic commentary on the Kalacakra Tantra. The verse says:

"Outcastes, flute- makers and so forth, and those who commit the five sins of immediate retribution (*ånantarya*), may become Buddhas in this very life, by pursuing the Mantra conduct." (VP I, p. 15)

On this verse, the VP says:

"The statement of the Lord is true. It is the regulation of the Tathågata that, in this Mantrayåna... even those who have committed five sins of immediate retribution... become the recipients of the fruit of Buddhahood in this life. It is not however acceptable to Tathågata that those who have entered into the Mantrayåna and still continue to commit the fierce *karma* such as the five sins of immediate retribution and so forth, yet become the recipients of the fruit of Buddhahood in this very life. There is the statement of the Tathågata in relation to the three vehicles—'There is *kalyåˆa* in the beginning, *kalyåˆa* in the middle and *kalyåˆa* in the end.' Thus on the basis of the statement of the Lord, this is the regulation of the Lord that those who have entered the Mantrayåna and yet are committing evil *karma* do not become the recipients of the fruit of Buddhahood," (VP I, p, 15).

In connection with the topic of the present paper, we come across in the VP a forceful argumentation aiming at the refutation of the discrimination on the basis of one's caste, class and profession. The KC

which is available to us at present is called the Concise Kålacakra Tantra, (*laghukålacakratantra*) an abridged version of the Root-tantra (*mËlatantra*) called the *Paramådibuddha*. According to the legend narrated in the KC and the VP, the Root-tantra was taught by the Buddha to King Sucandra, an emanation (*nirmåˆakåya*) of Vajrapåˆi, the tenth-stage Bodhisattva. King Sucandra in turn composed the Abridged Tantra in 12,000 verses in the *anu∑ˆubh* metre and wrote an extensive commentary consisting of 60,000 *ßlokas*, i. e. a unit consisting of 32 letters each. He gave the teachings into this Tantra to the people residing in the nine hundred and sixty million villages of the country called Íambhala. The VP records the prophesy of the Buddha, according which, in future there will be born in Sucandra's lineage his descendant called Yaßas, the emanation of Mañjußr¥. He will compose a concise version of the Root-tantra in 1030 verses in the *Sragdharå* metre. His son, Puˆ∂ar¥ka will compose a commentary consisting of 12,000 *ßlokas*. King Yaßas will be called Kalkin as he would bring the four Varˆas into a single clan (*kalka*) by means of the Vajra family initiation. Puˆ∂ar¥ka will be the second Kalkin. The word *kalka* has a peculiar meaning in this context; it means ‘a mixture of all classes into one single clan’. And the word *kalkin* means ‘one who possesses the (single) clan’. The word *kalkin* appears to have been borrowed from the Brahmanical, Puråˆic sources according to which Kalkin is the future and the tenth incarnation of Vi∑ˆu. The Kålacakra tradition has however its own context and interpretation.

The VP narrates a story how King Yaßas effected the maturation of people by teaching them this Tantra and bringing them into one clan. The story echoes the attempt of the Buddhists towards the refutation of the Brahmanical proponents of caste-class-discrimination. According to this story, King Yaßas gave the teachings into the Concise Kålacakra Tantra to the thirty five million Bråhmaˆa sages headed by SËryaratha residing in the nine nundred and sixty million villages in the country of Íambhala, at the Malaya Garden in the village Kaålpa, on the other bank of the S¥tå river. King Yaßas said:

"O SËryaratha and other Brahmaˆa sages, ... I should give the doctrine to you who follow the rules (laid down) in the Vedas and Sm®tis. Then... having separated out those Bråhmaˆas belonging to the families of high descent in various other countries, show them to me." On that instruction, the Bråhmaˆas, examining the practices of various countries, (found that) the customs of various countries were mutually contradictory, (and) they all fell down.... Having seen the (mutual) contradiction between them, King Yaßas said: 'Here, I must (direct you) to enter the Maˆ∂ala house of Lord Kålacakra and give you the worldly and the transcendental initiations. Moreover, by my order, you must eat, drink and form marriage relations with the Vajra family. But if you do not want to obey my order, then quit my nine hundred and sixty million villages and go any where you wish to. Otherwise, after eight hundred years have elapsed, your descendants will get inclined towards the Mleccha Dharma and will teach the Mleccha Dharma in the ninety six great lands of Íambhala and so forth. Using the mantra of Vismillå˙, the Mleccha deity, they will cut the throats of beasts with knives. Then they will eat flesh of these beasts killed with the mantra of their own deity, and will prohibit eating the flesh of those that die due to their own *karma*. That Dharma too is authoritative for you, because of the saying in the Sm®ti: 'Beasts are created for the sacrifice' (*yajñårtha◊ paßava˙ s®∑†å˙*/Manu Sm®ti, 5.39). There is no difference between the Mleccha Dharma and the Vedic Dharma in the matter of killing. Therefore, in future, after eight hundred years have elapsed, the sons and grandsons and so forth, (born) in your family, will see the valour of the Mlecchas or the manifestation of their devil deity in battle and will become Mlecchas. Once they have become Mlecchas, all those, the four Varˆas and so forth, dwelling in the nine hundred sixty million villages, will also become Mleccha. For, (there is) a saying of the Bråhmaˆa sage: ' The (path which is) trodden by great men, is the (right) path' (Mahåbhårata, 3. 313. 117; Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Vol. II, Sa◊vat 2023, p. 1833; BORI, Pune, 3 App. 32.68). Here, in the Mleccha Dharma as well as in the Vedic Dharma and also in the Dharma of the K∑atriyas, one must kill for the sake of the deity and the ancestors, For (there is) a saying of the Bråhmaˆas: 'Having satisfied the ancestors and the gods, (if) one eats

flesh, he is not a wrong-doer (Yåjñavalkya Sm®ti, 1.179); similarly, 'I see no fault in one who behaves wickedly with a wicked one'.

Thus, holding the Vedic Dharma to be authoritative, they will embrace the Mleccha Dharma. For this reason, I must give you this precept, so that in future (your descendants) will not enter the Mleccha Dharma. Therefore, you must obey my order." King Yaßas' speech, with the order implying a punishment, was the lightning, as it were, falling on the heads of the Bråhmaˆa sages. They said to SËryaratha: 'O SËryaratha, (please) convey (our request to) the lord of men, Yaßas, (in these words): 'We do not have an inclination for the Dharma consisting of the initiations into the Vajra family, having abandoned the Dharma based on caste, proclaimed in the Vedas. It is better that we go with your permission to the land of Óryas, south of the S¥tå river and the Himalayas, and north of the island of Ír¥laʃkå.' (SËryaratha informed King Yaßas accordingly and) with the permission of King Yaßas, all the Bråhmaˆa sages went out of the village of Kalåpa. ...With the power of the five supernatural faculties (*pañca abhijñå*), King Yaßas came to know that they have entered a forest. (He then thought): 'As a result of the departure of these to the land of Óryas, there will be an adverse effect on the minds of all sentient beings dwelling in the nine hundred and sixty million villages. (They will think): 'The reason why the Bråhmaˆa sages left this place is that the initiations into the Vajra family are not the path of right knowledge and that the Órya sages striving for liberation have left this place, having taken there family and so forth along, out of the fear of King Yaßas.'...Thinking thus, the people, the K∑atriyas and so forth, will meet with ill fortune, for their minds will be unsuitable, their being improper vessels for the (pursuit of) the profound and vast Dharma. Thus, having understood the inclination of the minds of all those people, King Yaßas became absorbed in the *samådhi* called 'stupefier of all the families of Vi∑ˆu, Brahmå and Rudra'. By means of that *samådhi*, and power of the blessings of the deity, all the Bråhmaˆa sages became unconscious in that forest. They were bound by the residents of the forest, Íabaras and so forth, and brought back to great Maˆ∂ala-palace and were thrown at the feet of King Yaßas; awakened they saw King Yaßas. (King Yaßas' minister, Sågaramati, convinced them to take initiations into the Vajra family. As a result of his speech endowed with the blessings of the Buddha, the Bråhmaˆa sages became inclined to

take initiations into the Kålacakra Tantra. King Yaßas abridged for them the Tantra and taught that Concise Kålacakra Tantra in the Sragdharå metre to those Bråhmaˆa sages.) (VP I, p. 27-29).

This story narrated in the VP shows how this Tantra came into being in order to convert the followers of the Vedic Dharma into Buddhism, particularly the Tantric Buddhism. It also shows that it was necessary to convert first the Bråhmaˆas so that those of other Varˆas would follow them. It also aims at removing the ego for caste or class from the minds of the followers of the Vedic Dharma. The VP elsewhere quotes a verse that says that the Buddha gave the teaching into the Vajrayåna in order to remove one's clinging to one's family (*kulagrahavinåßåya*, VP I, p. 16).

In this connection, the VP also explains how the Tantra deliberately uses irregular or ungrammatical forms and construction in order to eliminate the ego or obsession for the pure language on part of the people belonging to high castes and classes. It reflects the conflict between the elites and the masses over the purity of language. Puˆ∂ar¥ka, the author of the VP, says: " In order to remove the obsession for the proper words on part of those arguing in favour of proper words, he (i. e. the author of the Concise KC) relied on the meaning (and deliberately used the faulty construction). (For instance), there are in some verses corrupt forms. In some verses, there is a violation of (a rule of metre namely) *yatibhaʃga*. Somewhere there is a word without the case ending. In some words, letters and vowels are dropped. In some verses a long vowel is short and a short one is long. Somewhere the locative case is used for the ablative and the genitive for the dative.... A yogin should recognize corrupt words such as these and others, by reading the texts. Likewise, I must write this commentary relying on the meaning in order to remove the pride for proper words. Thus, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattavas teach the Dharma for the sake of liberation, relying on the meaning, by means of languages of different regions and of different grammatical treatises, in whatever manner so as to remove the pride for family, learning and proper words." (VP I, p. 29-30). The statement of the VP echoes the thought met with in the *Laʃkåvatåra SËtra*. It says: "O one of great intelligence! a

Bodhisattva, the Great Being, should rely upon the meaning and not upon the letters." (LS., III. 85 ff., ed. S. S. Bagchi, p. 79, l. 8).

This detailed explanation given by the author of the VP is aimed at attacking the followers of the Vedas and the Íåstras, the language of which is Sanskrit prescribed by the Påˆinian system of grammar. The Vedas have to be studied with great care and perfection so that there should not be any mistake as regards the pronunciation of the mantras, not even a mistake of a letter or an accent. Moreover, Patañjali, the author of the Mahåbhå∑ya on Påˆini's A∑†ådhyåy¥ says at the outset that Påˆini's work is the 'instruction into the words' (*ßabdånußåsana)*, that includes both the Vedic words as well as those used in the language of people. He further lays great emphasis on the importance of proper words, as there are a number of corrupt forms of one word when being uttered by variety of people (*Vyåkaraˆamahåbhå∑ya*, I.1.1., ed. Kielhorn/Abhyankar, Pune, 1962, Vol.1, p. 1 & 2). The language with ungrammatical words would not be called Sanskrit. Thus the emphasis laid on the proper language represents the ego of high class people towards their caste, class, family and gender. This might be one of the reasons for a norm laid down in the *Nå†yaßåstra*, according to which the inferior characters and women in Sanskrit plays speak Prakrit and not Sanskrit. The Prakrit languages are supposed to be the languages of the masses and not of the elites of those days. In this connection, it is interesting to note how a Prakrit poet defends his language, praising the beauty of a Prakrit composition in the following words:

paruså sakkaa-bandhå paua-bandho-vi hoi suumåro /
purisa-mahilåˆa◊ jettiam ihantara◊ tettiam imåˆam //

(Råjaßekhara's *KarpËramañjar¥*, I.7, ed. N. G. Suru, Mumbai, 1960, p. 3)

"The compositions in Sanskrit sound harsh, while that in Prakrit appears delicate. Whatever is the difference between a man and a woman, the same is the difference between these (two languages)."

The clinging to the standard Sanskrit language has a close relation with the Dharma and the Dharmaßåstra of high class people. Common people belonging to the class of merchants and low castes do not

understand Sanskrit. This is the reason why Lord Mahåv¥ra and Lord Buddha began to give their teachings in the languages of laymen and laywomen, in the vernaculars of those respective provinces. The Mahåyåna tradition maintains that both the Pål¥ Tripi†aka and the Mahåyåna SËtras are the sayings of the Buddha. The VP further elaborates this point and shows how the Buddha has used a variety of languages to teach the Dharma to the people residing in a variety of provinces. It says: "Here, the Buddha is measureless, the Dharma is measureless and the Saſgha is measureless', Therefore, on the basis of the saying of Tathågata, ...there is not just one Omniscient Teacher. There is not one omniscient language that conveys the meaning, by means of the utterance of all sentient beings. There is not just one mention of the dwelling place. The Saſgha of the Íråvakas is not the sole requestor, but here, in accordance with various inclinations of sentient beings, there is many an omniscient one, many an omniscient language, many a dwelling place, many a requestor, and many a Dharma teaching. Therefore, Tathågata's teaching of all the Tantras (beginning with the sentence) "Thus have I heard", and so forth, (was done) by means of not only one language of gods (*devabhå∑å*, i. e. Sanskrit) that is produced with (*sthåna* and) *prayatna* related to the throat, the palate and so forth." (VP I, p. 31)." The VP further explains how the Tathågata gave the teachings in various manners and remarks in the following words: "Because if this Sanskrit speech of limited extent (*prådeßika*), without the omniscient language having the nature of the utterance of all sentient beings, the Buddha would also be one of limited extent." (VP I, p. 34)

In this connection, the VP has a similar statement in the introductory verses. The passage says:

"Those who aim at the path to omniscience do not have a great discrimination between proper and improper words. They always enter the path of the great ones, even through the inferior languages of various provinces. The Omniscient One's language is One, in accordance with the inclinations of sentient beings. The language of those who argue about the words and so forth is the other, (it is the one) created in the grammar by the gods and the snakes. A yogin grasps the meaning even from corrupt

words and from languages of different regions. Swans extract and drink the milk mixed in water. In the field of ultimate reality, great ones never rely on the letters. What is the use of the scientific term when one understands the meaning from the local expressions? One does not acquire knowledge when instructed discriminating between the improper and the proper words. That which is of limited extent in the world is not the language of the Omniscient One." (VP I, p. 5)

The Sanskrit language was associated with the followers of the Brahmå cult, the Íaivas and the Vai∑ˆavas. In that connection, the VP says: "Here in the land of Óryas, Buddhists, possessing childish inellect, see the pride of the heterodox (*t¥rthika*) Pandits, the proponents of (proper) words, and think:. 'Just as the tutelary deities of the followers of the Brahmå cult, the Vai∑ˆavas and the Íaivas and so forth-- Brahmå, Hari and Hara and so forth-- speak Sanskrit, so too our tutelary deities, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, speak Sanskrit. Here, these Buddhas and the Bodhisattavas become the teachrers of Dharma and conduct the *Sa∫g¥tis* by means of the utterance of all sentient beings, and not (solely) by means of this Sanskrit speech of limited extent, without the omniscient language. Therefore, the language of limited extent that is confined to the category of gods is not (the language) of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattavas, for they teach the Dharma using the utterance of various sentient beings." (VP I, p. 34)

Why does Puˆ∂ar¥ka criticize the clinging only to the Sanskrit language again and again in such an aggressive manner? Though the first three of the four Varˆas, namely, the Bråhmaˆas, the K∑atriyas and the Vaißyas are entitled to study the Vedas and the Íåstras, it appears that this precept was no longer in practice at the time of the composition of the VP. Some time in the medieval period, a notion came into being, according to which in the Kali age, there remain only two Varˆas, namely, the Bråhmaˆa and the SËdra (*kalåv ådyantayos sthiti˙*). At the time of the composition of the VP, in the 10th or11th century A. D., it was believed that the Bråhmaˆas and the K∑atriyas alone are entitled to the study of the Vedas. This belief can be corroborated by a statement in the Bhagavadg¥tå that says: “Women, the Vaißyas and the ÍËdras as well-- these too can

attain the supreme destiny, i. e. liberation" (*Bhagavadg¥tå*, 9.32). In this context, the VP says: "Here, in the world of mortals, one can plainly see that the Dharmas they taught using the Sanskrit language-- the G¥tå, the Siddhånta and the Purå^as-- are all of limited extent. And so are the four Vedas, because (there is a precept that only) the Bråhma^as and the K∑atriyas should study the Vedas, but the Vaißyas, the ÍËdras and so forth should not. Similarly, it is said: 'The four castes-- Bråhma^as, K∑triyas, Vaißyas and ÍËdras-- should listen to the Dharma of the G¥tå, the Siddhånta and the Purå^as from the mouths of the Bråhma^as and should take up the mendicant life, while fishermen and so forth should not.' Because of these statements prohibiting access to Dharma, the Dharmas taught by these (gods) are of limited extent; they do not benefit all sentient beings. Here in the land of mortals, using the Sanskrit language of limited extent, those (gods) are unable to teach the worldly and the transcendental Dharma to sentient beings having various inclinations, by means of their various utterances. Therefore, they prohibit the Vaißyas, ÍËdras and so forth, saying, 'Here in the land of mortals, Vaißyas, ÍËdras and so forth, those born from the inferior wombs, should not study the Vedas and should not take up the mendicant's life and staff.' ...Those who are possessed by false pride believe--'A single word-- well-pronounced yields one's desire in heaven' (cf. *Vyåkara^amahåbhå∑ya* on På^ini 6. 1. 84, ed. Kielhorn/Abhyankar, Pune, 1972, Vol. III, p. 58). Because they do not possess the omniscient language, (they think); "Here in the world of mortals, if all people, ÍËdras and so forth, become expert in the Vedas, the G¥tå, the Siddhånta, and the science of logic, who will revere (us) the Bråhma^as? for the knowledge of science and Dharma will be common to all and all the householder Bråhma^as addicted to worldly pleasures would no longer have special qualities. Knowing this, various sages, greedy for wealth, wrote down the Dharma of the G¥tå, the Siddhånta and the Purå^as and so forth in the books, using the Sanskrit language.. Also, they laid down a rule-- 'The Vedas must be studied through the oral recitation.' This rule creates great ignorance in the minds of the childish ones, hence it is considered to be the teaching of the one who is not omniscient. Here, it is said, 'In former times, the Dharmas of the Vedas, the G¥tå, the Siddhånta

and the Purâˆas were not written down in books; they stayed in the mouths of ascetics. Then, due to the (adverse effect of) the time of five decays, (*pañcaka∑åyakåla*), (i. e. in the Kali age), the ascetics wrote them down, because their wisdom was inferior. Here, Buddhists should not praise the teaching into the parochial Dharma of Hari, Hara and so forth; for it gives worldly suffering, produces false pride and is full of the pride in the casteism." (VP I, 40-41)

Thus, having attacked the Sanskrit language and the scriptures of the adherents of Vedism, Vai∑ˆavas and Íaivas, that discriminate people of four Varˆas on the basis of their birth, the VP further attacks the very notion of the divine origin of the four Varˆas. The oldest reference to this notion is found in the famous *Puru∑asËkta* of the Ùgveda (X. 90.12). The verse in question mentions all the four Varˆas together and speaks of their origin. It is said in that hymn: 'The Bråhmaˆa was His mouth; the one of the royal race was made His two arms; as for the Vaißya, he was His two thighs; while the ÍËdra was born from His feet.' The KC refers to this mantra, while mentioning the doctrine of Brahmå and Vi∑ˆu (KC II. 166). The VP refutes this doctrine, saying: "Here the origin of Bråhmaˆas is supposed to be the mouth of Brahmå. etc. Thus there are four Varˆas. Now, there is the fifth Varˆa, next to the four ones, namely that of the outcastes (*caˆ∂åla*). Then what is the origin of that Varˆa? And moreover, if it is indeed true that the Bråhmaˆas were born from the mouth of Brahmå, then I ask-- ' Were the Bråhmaˆa women too born from the same? If they were (born from the same mouth), they become the sisters of the Bråhmaˆas, for they were born from one and the same womb. Thus, is it (not true) that the marriages of K∑atriyas and so forth are arranged with their respective sisters? How? And if so, then it is the upsurge of the Mlecha Dharma. On the upsurge of the Mlecha Dharma, there takes place the decadence of castes, and as a result of the decadence of castes, one attains the hell. This is the doctrine (of the Vedists and so forth) (VP I, p. 261).

Thus, having ridiculed the belief in the divine origin of the four Varˆas as expressed in the Puru∑asËkta, the VP attempts to show that the concept of caste cannot be justified on the basis of logic. It says: "Here, if

there is only one creator of (his) offspings, how could then there be four Varˆas? As for example, if there are four sons of one father, each of them does not have a separate caste. The same (can be said) in relation to Varˆas. If you say that the difference (can be justified) on the basis of (their origin from different parts of Brahmå's body, such as) the mouth and so forth, then it cannot be proved logically. How? As for example, there is no difference between the fruits of the fig (*udumbara*) tree; (although they) are born at the bottom, at the middle part and at the top (of the tree). Similar is the case with the offsprings of Brahmå. And also, as there is not seen any difference between men, due to the difference in their colour, namely, white, red, yellow and black, and also there is not seen the difference as regards the seven basic constituents (*dhåtus*, i. e. *rasa*, *rakta* and so on), the faculties (*indriya*), happiness, sorrow, learning, knowledge and so forth; therefore, it is established that the caste cannot be determined (on the basis of birth) (VP I, p. 261).

The VP elsewhere refutes the doctrines of Vedas, the G¥tå, the Puråˆas, the Råmåyaˆa and the Mahåbhårata (VP III, p. 94-95). The Dharma that is centred around the horse sacrifice and other sacrifices is not a real Dharma. In order to show the futility of the pursuit of Vedic Dharma, the author quotes a verse ascribed to Íuka or Íukra, The verse says: "Having cut (a wood for) the sacrificial pole, having killed an animal (in the sacrifice), having created the mud of blood, if (by all these evil deeds) one attains the heaven, by what act does one attain the hell?" (VP I, p. 262).The VP concludes-- "Therefore, the Veda is not self-born; the mouth and so forth (of Brahmå) is not the origin of people. The saying as to 'there is no Dharma other than the horse sacrifice' is all inconsistent utterance and (too) meaningless to be considered. Thus the doctrine of Brahmå and the doctrine of Vi∑ˆu have to be discarded along with that of Áßvara (i. e. Íiva)" (VP I, p. 262).

The KC and its commentary VP were probably composed in the 10th or the 11th century A. D., on the background of the Islamic invasion. This is the only Buddhist Tantra that echoes the Islamic invasion and the advent of Islam in India. The expression Mlecchа Dharma refers to Islam. The Tantra appears to have been composed with a view to defeating the

Islamic troops in the battle and establishing the Dharma. This Tantra had a twofold task to be undertaken: On one hand, it had to refute the Vedic tenets advocating the Dharma that supports the hierarchy among people on the basis of birth, caste, class and so forth. On the other, it had to confront with the newly arrived Mleccha Dharma. By showing the similarities between these two Dharmas--the Vedic and that of the Mlecchas, it attempts in its unique way to refute the doctrines supporting the discrimination on the basis of the caste, the class and so forth.

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